

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN
SOUTHERN DIVISION**

KIRK BERNARD HENDEN,

Petitioner,

Case Number: 2:17-11563
HONORABLE SEAN F. COX

v.

WILLIE SMITH,

Respondent.

**OPINION AND ORDER DENYING PETITION FOR WRIT OF
HABEAS CORPUS AND DENYING CERTIFICATE OF APPEALABILITY**

Petitioner Kirk Bernard Henden has filed a *pro se* petition for a writ of habeas corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2254. Petitioner is incarcerated at the Ionia Maximum Correctional Facility in Ionia, Michigan. He challenges his 2013 conviction in Manistee County Circuit Court for assault of a prison employee. It is apparent from the face of the petition that habeas relief is not warranted. Therefore, the Court summarily dismisses the petition.

I.

Upon the filing of a habeas corpus petition, the Court must promptly examine the petition to determine “if it plainly appears from the face of the petition and any exhibits annexed to it that the petitioner is not entitled to relief.” Rule 4, Rules Governing Section 2254 cases. If the Court determines that the petitioner is not entitled to relief, the court shall summarily dismiss the petition. *McFarland v. Scott*, 512 U.S. 849, 856 (1994) (“Federal courts are authorized to dismiss summarily any habeas petition that appears legally

insufficient on its face”). The habeas petition does not present grounds which may establish the violation of a federal constitutional right. The petition will be dismissed.

Review of this case is governed by the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 (“AEDPA”). Under the AEDPA, a state prisoner is entitled to a writ of habeas corpus only if he can show that the state court’s adjudication of his claims:

(1) resulted in a decision that was contrary to, or involved an unreasonable application of, clearly established Federal law, as determined by the Supreme Court of the United States; or

(2) resulted in a decision that was based on an unreasonable determination of the facts in light of the evidence presented in the State court proceeding.

28 U.S.C. § 2254(d).

A decision of a state court is “contrary to” clearly established federal law if the state court arrives at a conclusion opposite to that reached by the Supreme Court on a question of law, or if the state court decides a case differently than the Supreme Court has on a set of materially indistinguishable facts. *Williams v. Taylor*, 529 U.S. 362, 405 (2000). An “unreasonable application” occurs when “a state court decision unreasonably applies the law of [the Supreme Court] to the facts of a prisoner’s case.” *Id.* at 408. “[A] federal habeas court may not issue the writ simply because that court concludes in its independent judgment that the relevant state-court decision applied clearly established federal law erroneously or incorrectly.” *Id.* at 411. “[A] state court’s determination that a claim lacks merit precludes federal habeas relief so long as ‘fairminded jurists could disagree’ on the correctness of the state court’s decision.” *Harrington v. Richter*, 562 U.S. 86, 101 (2011). To obtain habeas

relief in federal court, a state prisoner is required to show that the state court's rejection of his claim "was so lacking in justification that there was an error well understood and comprehended in existing law beyond any possibility for fairminded disagreement." *Id.* at 103.

II.

Petitioner argues that the Manistee County Circuit Court lacked subject matter jurisdiction over his case because the statute under which he was convicted lacked an Enacting Clause or title, as required by the Michigan Constitution. This claim is not cognizable on federal habeas review.

It is well established that "federal habeas corpus relief does not lie for errors of state law." *Estelle v. McGuire*, 502 U.S. 62, 67 (1991), (quoting *Lewis v. Jeffers*, 497 U.S. 764, 780 (1990)). The determination of whether a particular state court is vested with jurisdiction under state law and is the proper venue to hear a criminal case is a "function of the state courts, not the federal judiciary." *Wills v. Egeler*, 532 F.2d 1058, 1059 (6th Cir. 1976); *see also Strunk v. Martin*, 27 F. App'x 473, 475 (6th Cir. 2001). Petitioner's claim that the Michigan courts lacked jurisdiction over his criminal case rests only on alleged violations of the Michigan Constitution. A habeas petitioner is not entitled to habeas relief based upon an alleged violation of the Michigan Constitution. *See Hudson v. Berghuis*, 174 F. App'x 948, 952, n.1 (6th Cir. 2006). Federal due process does not require state officials to follow their own procedural statutes and rules. *Sweeton v. Brown*, 27 F.3d 1162, 1165 (6th Cir. 1994). The petition fails to allege the violation of the Constitution and relief is denied.

III.

For the reasons stated above, Petitioner's petition for a writ of habeas corpus is DISMISSED. Furthermore, reasonable jurists would not debate the Court's assessment of Petitioner's claims, nor conclude that the issues deserve encouragement to proceed further. The Court therefore DECLINES to grant a certificate of appealability under 28 U.S.C. § 2253(c)(2). *See Slack v. McDaniel*, 529 U.S. 473, 484 (2000). However, if Petitioner chooses to appeal the Court's decision, he may proceed *in forma pauperis* on appeal because an appeal could be taken in good faith. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(3).

SO ORDERED.

Dated: June 12, 2017

s/Sean F. Cox

Sean F. Cox

U. S. District Judge

I hereby certify that on June 12, 2017, the foregoing document was served on counsel of record via electronic means and upon Kirk Henden via First Class mail at the address below:

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